
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO CREATE A COMPACT OF
FREE ASSOCIATION ADVISORY BODY.

1 WHEREAS, each immigrant group in Hawaii, such as the
2 Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, Southeast Asians, and Samoans, has
3 endured discrimination and inequity; and
4

5 WHEREAS, individuals who have immigrated to Hawaii from the
6 independent nations of the Republic of the Marshall Islands,
7 Federated States of Micronesia, and Republic of Palau are
8 referred to as the Compact of Free Association (COFA) residents,
9 who face the usual prejudices but additionally face special
10 challenges due to their unique immigration status; and
11

12 WHEREAS, COFA residents' immigration status excludes them
13 from receiving essential benefits enjoyed by U.S. citizens and
14 legal permanent residents, and there have also been public
15 debates about the allocation of equitable resources for
16 education, housing, employment, and health care for COFA
17 residents – resources that for other groups are provided without
18 question; and
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20 WHEREAS, such inequity is contrary to the values of care
21 and aloha of the Native Hawaiian culture, which has historically
22 embraced newcomers; and
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24 WHEREAS, despite Native Hawaiians enduring profound trauma
25 and discrimination in their own right, this culture of aloha
26 continues to serve as the State's moral standard, thereby
27 promoting caring, community-oriented public policy; and
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29 WHEREAS, the unique immigration status of COFA residents
30 stems from their close and historical relationship between the
31 United States and their homeland of origin; and
32



1 WHEREAS, in 1947, shortly after World War II, the United
2 Nations granted the United States trusteeship over what today is
3 the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of
4 Micronesia, and Republic of Palau, also known as the Compact
5 Nations or the Freely Associated States; and
6

7 WHEREAS, the current relationship between the United States
8 and the three Compact Nations is a sacred agreement for the
9 mutual benefit of all four nations; and
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11 WHEREAS, from 1946 to 1958, inhabitants of what today are
12 the Compact Nations endured the testing and detonation of sixty-
13 seven nuclear bombs, which destroyed homelands and engendered a
14 scourge of cancer that continues to afflict these populations to
15 this day; and
16

17 WHEREAS, the Compact Nations provide the United States with
18 immeasurable benefits of national security, such as hosting the
19 U.S. intercontinental ballistic missile defense system and
20 granting the United States exclusive military strategic denial
21 to millions of square miles of the Pacific Ocean - a distance of
22 more than one and a half times the width of the continental
23 United States - at a time when global relations among
24 superpowers are increasingly fraught; and
25

26 WHEREAS, COFA residents have among the highest per capita
27 United States military service and service-related deaths; and
28

29 WHEREAS, COFA residents have shared with Hawaii, through
30 their master navigator, "Papa" Mau Piailug, the gift of
31 traditional navigation that was utilized by the Hokulea,
32 enabling a Hawaiian cultural movement of immeasurable beauty and
33 pride; and
34

35 WHEREAS, an estimated eighteen thousand COFA residents
36 legally reside in Hawaii, with an unknown proportion being U.S.
37 citizens who were born in the United States, and collectively
38 comprise just 1.3 percent of the State's population; and
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40 WHEREAS, COFA residents pay taxes and fully contribute to
41 Hawaii's economy; furthermore, they come from proud, rich,



1 vibrant, and ancient Pacific cultures that enrich Hawaii's
2 communities; and

3
4 WHEREAS, contrary to the mutually beneficial intent of the
5 trusteeship, COFA residents are treated like last-tier citizens,
6 denied adequate and equitable state-funded health care coverage
7 provided to similar populations, and thrown into a maze of
8 administrative and economic barriers that foster shame, illness,
9 suffering, and death; now, therefore,

10
11 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirtieth Legislature
12 of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2019, the House of
13 Representatives concurring, that the Department of Human
14 Services is urged to create a COFA Advisory Body, at least one-
15 third of whose members are COFA residents, that will:

- 16
17 (1) Recommend the best approach for providing parity in
18 state-funded health coverage for otherwise eligible
19 COFA residents;
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21 (2) Provide an economic analysis of the financial impact
22 of the Advisory Body's recommendations;
23
24 (3) Recommend steps for reducing or eliminating entirely
25 administrative burdens for program enrollment and re-
26 enrollment;
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28 (4) Recommend strategies for community outreach,
29 stakeholder education, and administration;
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31 (5) Provide an assessment of the implementation of the
32 recommendations at months six, twelve, and twenty-four
33 after implementation;
34
35 (6) Undertake an evaluation of current demographic and
36 other data collection and census activities relevant
37 to COFA residents, and make appropriate
38 recommendations for standardization and equity; and
39
40 (7) Evaluate the outcomes and status of recommendations
41 from the Compacts of Free Association Task Force



1 convened pursuant to Senate Resolution No. 142, S.D. 1
2 (Regular Session of 2007); and
3

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the evaluation criteria for the
5 COFA Advisory Body's recommendations are as follows:
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- 7 (1) State-funded health coverage for COFA residents will
8 be equal to that available through Med-QUEST;
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- 10 (2) When evaluating coverage options, the Advisory Body
11 will take into consideration health care access, cost,
12 and administrative burden for participants;
13
- 14 (3) The Advisory Body will also take into account cost-
15 effectiveness for the State and administrative burden
16 for affected state agencies, insurers, and other
17 administering stakeholders; however, the Advisory Body
18 will prioritize paragraphs (1) and (2);
19
- 20 (4) Enrollees will not be required to pay copayments,
21 premiums, coinsurance, or other related fees upfront
22 and then seek reimbursement;
23
- 24 (5) Structural inequities will be eliminated, and program
25 eligibility requirements should align with other
26 related federal and state program requirements for
27 similar populations, including the requirements of
28 HealthCare.gov;
29
- 30 (6) Administrative barriers to participation, including
31 enrollment and re-enrollment, will be minimized or
32 eliminated entirely;
33
- 34 (7) Specific program requirements will allow agency
35 flexibility; and
36
- 37 (8) Clear evidence of the best approaches and practices
38 from other states and communities; and
39

40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this
41 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Human
42 Services.

